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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3773rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 30 April 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Great Lakes region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reaffirms the statement of its President of 24 April 1997 (S/PRST/1997/22) and welcomes the recent agreement by the President of Zaire and the leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (ADFL) on a time and venue for a meeting to discuss a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict in Zaire. It reiterates its full support for the United Nations five-point peace plan, endorsed by its resolution 1097 (1997) of 18 February 1997, calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and especially calls for both parties to reach a rapid agreement on peaceful transitional arrangements leading to the holding of democratic and free elections with the participation of all parties.

"The Security Council notes the commitment by the leader of the ADFL to allow United Nations and other humanitarian agencies access to refugees in eastern Zaire in order to provide humanitarian assistance and to implement the repatriation plan of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including the use of both airports in Kisangani. It also notes his commitment to be flexible regarding the duration of the repatriation operation, which should move ahead as quickly as possible. It expresses concern at reports of obstruction of humanitarian assistance efforts but notes that humanitarian access has improved recently. It calls on the ADFL to abide by these commitments and to enable the UNHCR repatriation plan to be implemented without conditions or delay.

"The Security Council also expresses its deep concern regarding the continuing reports of massacres, other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law in eastern Zaire. In this context, it reiterates its call upon the ADFL and others concerned in the region to cooperate fully with the recently established United Nations investigative mission by ensuring unimpeded access to all areas and sites under investigation, as well as the security of the members of the mission. It

attaches great importance to the commitment of the leader of the ADFL to take appropriate action against members of the ADFL who violate the rules of international humanitarian law concerning the treatment of refugees and civilians.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

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